

Frequently Asked Questions Concerning Child Care and COVID-19 Week of June 1-5, 2020

At this time, we have not mandated any closures of child care facilities. We are not conducting inspections at this time and we have also postponed training through June. We are keeping in contact with our centers for updates on closures and answering questions as they come in. We are taking self-reports and providing technical assistance by phone and email. We are keeping track of the closures of facilities, so if you are closed and have not reported it or were closed and have reopened please contact your license official so they can update your status. We want you all to know that we are here to answer questions and provide technical assistance as needed. We want to encourage you to reach out to your licensing officials when you have a question or concern. Please continue to follow the guidelines from CDC, those on our webpage (www.healthmys.com), and those from your local officials. We are working hard to ensure that we make the best decisions for the children of Mississippi as we know you are as well. As we move forward, we will continue to assess the current situation and make changes as needed. We appreciate your patience and hard work during this time.

Q: Can we schedule field trips with groups of 10 or fewer?

A: Field trips are not being restricted. We recommend you follow all guidelines concerning social distancing and grouping of children.

Q: Has there been any updates on summer camps?

A: Summer Day Camps are under the same regulations as child care centers and no changes have been made to Child Care Regulations at this time.

Q: Is Child Care Licensure requiring child care facilities to follow CDC guidelines? What happens if they choose not to?

A: At this time, we are recommending child care facilities adhere to CDC guidelines.

Q: Due to economic hardship during COVID-19, will monetary penalties on account still have to be paid, even if it is from prior inspections?

A: If you have a request concerning a monetary penalty please contact your licensing official. These are being handled as needed and on an individual basis.

Q: Can child care providers choose to operate as normal, and not follow CDC guidelines?

A: Child care centers are deemed essential by the governor and can operate as normal at this time. We are recommending they follow CDC guidelines and as information changes, we will continue to get it out to providers.

Q: What would be the process for having additional space licensed to help meet the lower group size of 10?

A: At this time, we are not able to conduct field inspections. Please contact your licensing official for questions concerning the capacity and/or floor plans of your facility. They can better inform you of what rooms have previously been measured and approved for child care.

Q: My child care program is currently doing drop-off and pick-up at the front door. How should we have families sign their children in and out each day?

A: If possible, have a staff member stationed outside the entry/exit door. The parent should get the child out of the car and the staff member should provide parents the sign in and sign out form. The staff member should take the child inside the facility. We recommend the parent provide their own pen to reduce multiple people handling the same pen. CDC has guidelines outlined for drop off and pick up. These can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html#pickup>

Q: Is there an alternative disinfectant that can be used in my facility, since there are shortages of disinfectant wipes, sprays, and cleaners?

A: CDC provides information on proper cleaning/disinfecting. You can also review Appendix H of Child Care Regulations for information on approved products and cleaning/disinfecting. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html>
https://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/resources/78.pdf

Q: Will providers and staff have a grace period to get contact hours?

A: Child Care Licensure is working with providers concerning items needed for renewals, such as contact hours. Please contact your licensing officials with any questions or concerns. These are being handled on a case by case basis.

Q: If a family that has a child attending a child care center goes on vacation do they have to quarantine when they return home before coming back to the facility?

A: They are not required to quarantine; however, each facility may want to develop policies/procedures for their business. If the child care center has a policy requiring children to not return for a specific amount of time once they return from a vacation, they should make sure all parents/families are aware of this policy. Please also keep in mind that a screening process is recommended for children and staff attending the facility. Information on screening can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html#ScreenChildren>